

# FITNESS

---

## Fitness on a Budget

You may be under the impression that you need to join a gym if you want to take exercise seriously. Although gyms offer a wide variety of equipment as well as personal trainers to assist you, don't be discouraged if you can't afford a gym membership. Plenty of low-cost alternatives are available to help you get fit.

### Start with modest investments

If you're just getting started and are looking for real fitness bargains, here are some low-cost exercise products you can buy for the home or take with you when you travel:

- **Dumbbells.** Dumbbells are small, hand-held weights that you can use to strengthen your upper body. They come in a variety of sizes, from about 2 pounds all the way up to 50 pounds.
- **Jump-ropes.** They're lightweight and easy to pack, so you can take this cardiovascular workout on the road.
- **Resistance tubing and bands.** Used for strength training, these lightweight, portable bands come in varying degrees of resistance, depending on your fitness level. You can also change the level of resistance by changing the way you hold the band. You can do a variety of upper and lower body exercises with resistance equipment.
- **Exercise videos.** Recreate the feel of a health club aerobics class in your own living room. Many videos are good for improving strength and flexibility, too. Before buying a tape, check the instructor's credentials. If it's a celebrity's tape, do certified fitness instructors serve as advisors to ensure that the workout is safe and effective? Pick a tape that matches your current fitness level so that you don't get discouraged by exercises that are too hard or too easy. If you can, borrow the video from your library first to see if you like it.
- **Fill empty milk, water or dishwashing-detergent bottles** with water or sand and secure the top with duct tape to create an inexpensive set of adjustable weights. By adding more water or sand to the jugs, you can adjust the weights as your fitness level changes. Use your household scale to check the weight. These weights are good for upper body exercises and as added resistance for lower body workouts.
- **Canned goods** come in a variety of sizes and are easy to hold in your hand as weights. You can also take a pair of tube socks and put an 8-ounce can in each. Tie the socks together, creating a 1-pound bag that you can use as an ankle or hand weight.

